DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 633 HE 018 622

AUTHOR Permaul, Jane Szutu
TITLE Monitoring and Supporting Experiential Learning. PANEL Resource Paper #5.
INSTITUTION National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, Raleigh, NC. Peer Assistance Network in Experiential Learning.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 20p.; For related documents, see HE 018 617-635.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Objectives; College Students; *Experiential Learning; Feedback; *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; Internship Programs; *Practicum Supervision; *Recordkeeping; *Student Evaluation; Student Experience; Supervisory Methods

ABSTRACT

The role of instructional personnel in supporting students on field experience assignments is discussed. After identifying current monitoring practices, attention is directed to: making effective use of experience for learning, making progress toward learning objectives, providing students feedback, providing additional resources, and continuously documenting learning. The process of documenting the field work in journals, logs, or field notes allows students to commit their experience to words, and periodic reflection on the writings may help students to generalize and to formulate new concepts. One form of journal recording uses critical incidents as foci for reflection, while another approach asks students to record by describing learning experiences encountered. Seminars and individual conferences are best used for interaction, sharing of experiences, and feedback. Two instruments allow the students to self-monitor while providing the instructor and field supervisor similar information: a matrix form to record student achievement along developmental indicators in relationship to learning objectives, and activity sheets to document achievement of learning contract objectives. Effective monitoring/support of learning requires clear learning objectives and activities. (SW)

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PANEL Resource Paper #5

MONITORING AND SUPPORTING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Jane Szutu Permaui

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PANEL Resource Paper #5

MONITORING AND SUPPORTING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

by Jane Szutu Permaul, Ed.D.

Jane Szutu Permaul is Director of Field Studies Development at UCLA and President of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education. She was a leader in the growth of the Society for Field Experience Education (now NSIEE) and has authored several articles on the effective use of experiential education.

NEEDS AND PURPOSES

Once the student begins his or her field assignment, is he or she completely on his/her own? Do the sponsoring institution, the instructor and program coordinator pretty much have to sit back and hope for the best? Or are there continuing roles for the institution and its personnel to play in guiding and enhancing the student's learning from the field experience? The answer to the last question is an unequivocal YES.

Coaches of most sports work diligently with their players in preparation for each game. Once the game is in play, the outcome depends heavily on how well prepared the players were and their actual performance. However, the coaches are not sitting back passively while the game is being played. They are on the sideline observing not only the players' performances, but the environment in which they must play. The coaches call time-outs to give feedback and instruction to the players based on their observation and backed by their knowledge of the game. The intent is to help the players improve their performance and succeed in reaching their objectives, whether it is to score a goal or to prevent the opponent from scoring.

In supporting students on field experience assignments, the instructional personnel have similar roles as those played by the coaches. They are to be knowledgeable observers, facilitators, resource persons, advisers and evaluators. These roles are intended to assure that everything is proceeding according to the learning plan, that unanticipated events are dealt with constructively, and that any needed adjustments are made in a timely manner in order to take full advantage of the experience for learning. Specifically, the instructional personnel should ascertain the following:

a) that the student is using the experience effectively to learn, which calls for an understanding and application of experiential learning skills;

b) that the student is progressing in the right direction as dictated by the learning goals and objectives, which require an ongoing documentation of learning that is "measurable;"

c) that the student is getting timely feedback on his/her performance in order to make needed adjustments in both behavior and the nature of the placement;

d) that the student is guided to additional and supplementary resources which enable the student to better understand the assignment and function more effectively in completing it; and

e) that the student documents his/her learning in order to have data for the final product and for final evaluation.

These needs and purposes for monitoring and supporting learning are supported by many (Babits and Sigmon, 1975; Duley, 1980; Duley and Gordon, 1977; Jenks and Murphy, 1980; and Permaul and Miko, 1976).

Despite the importance of monitoring and supporting learning while students are in the field, few systematic studies have been conducted on procedures and practices which would provide practitioners with principles and guidelines. Most procedures used are individually devised by the instructor based on his/her own experience and on a limited peer network of information. Nevertheless, a review of existing practices will contribute to the formation of principles in designing procedures for monitoring and supporting.

EXISTING PRACTICES

From a recent survey of 85 faculty members in California, Utah, and Nevada, several activities for monitoring purposes appear prevalent (Jenks and Murphy, 1981). They include the following:

a) journals, logs and progress reports

b) occasional and term papers

c) seminars conducted concurrently with field experience activities

d) traditional examinations

e) supervisors' comments and evaluations

f) individual conferences with students

g) occasional site visits and/or more frequent telephone contacts with field supervisors.

The two activities most frequently cited are journals (or logs) and concurrent seminars. Individual conferences are used uniformly on an as-needed basis but seldom as required activities. Dependence on field supervisors is considered ideal by many, but only a few faculty members rely on them heavily. The reluctance to depend on this source stems from its unreliability, since few supervisors are formally given the responsibility or carefully trained to perform the task. Therefore, most faculty members consider monitoring by field supervisors a bonus rather than a regular activity.

Although common monitoring and supporting activities have emerged, little is known on just how each activity is used for monitoring and supporting learning. Based on the brief descriptions from the survey, the journal and seminar are both used to encourage student reflection about the experience. The seminar has two additional functions -- sharing of experiences among classmates and supplementing experience with additional sources of information. All other scheduled activities except individual conferences seem to be used primarily for evaluation of student performance. The individual conference, as is true with classroom-laboratory oriented instruction, is used to deal with individual problems.

Yet, as a result of another project, Jenks and Murphy (1980) strongly recommend individual conferences as the vehicle for monitoring student progress, with group discussion as an alternative. The recommendation is based on the use of the inquiry model for monitoring in which individual or group conferences are devoted to debriefing to determine what has occurred, synthesizing to help "the student understand, interpret and apply what has been learned," and replanning to establish what needs to come next in completing the learning objectives.

Duley and Gordon (1977) stress the who, what, when and how of the monitoring process rather than the precise format. They note the following as critical concerns in monitoring experiential learning:

a) Establish what to monitor to include the student's objectives, progress, and any problems encountered by the student;

b) Determine how the monitoring is to be performed, which can include any or all of the activities noted earlier;

c) Establish a time frame for the monitoring, outlining when visits, conferences, evaluation reports and so on are to be done; and

d) Assign the person(s) who is(are) responsible to do the monitoring, which may involve faculty, staff, field supervisors, or a combination of these personnel.

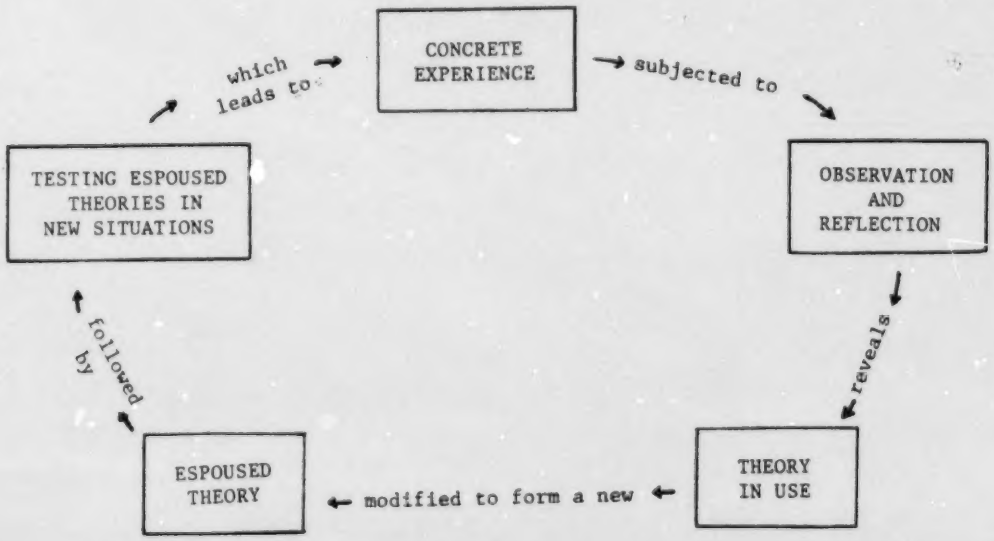
Both the formats and guidelines provided by existing practices have been useful to many. However, they can serve the practitioners more effectively if specific content to be used in each recommended activity can be clearly articulated. This, in part, can be established by considering five principles of effective monitoring and supporting activities for instructional personnel in relation to the experiential learning process and the educational development of students.

CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Making Effective Use of Experience for Learning. Several compatible experiential learning models have been developed outlining the specific action steps which must be taken for one to complete learning based on experience. David Kolb (1975) notes that experiential learning occurs through a four-stage cycle: "Immediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection. These observations are assimilated into a 'theory' from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses then serve as guides interacting to create new experiences" (p. 1). Only when a student completes the cycle does learning occur.

Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1974) have a similar theory on experiential learning. They note that the experience checked against "espoused theory" (established concepts) through reflection leads to formulation of "theory-in-use" (integrated concepts based on one's actual experience and knowledge of espoused theories), which in turn modifies one's action. Ultimately, through this cycle of experimentation, a student will develop his/her own explicit theory and thereby be able to go from specifics to generalization and to additional specifics.

A. Doherty, M. M. Mentkowski and K. Conrad (1978) then combined the two models to form a third experiential learning model shown in Figure 1.



Whichever model one chooses to adopt or create, the implications for monitoring and supporting activities are the same. Basically, the activities must require the student to complete in sequence the critical steps outlined in one of the models. For example, based on Kolb's model, the student would be required first to describe his/her experience; second, to describe what he/she thinks and feels about the experience; third, to formulate tentative theories and generalizations; and, fourth, outline how he/she may test theories and generalizations back in the fixed situation. This last step will lead to a new experience, and the cycle will be repeated. This requirement can be completed through use of journals, short papers, interviews with supervisor or instructor, or group seminars. Whatever the format, it is important that the student is guided to complete the cycle regularly rather than just having an experience without some form of disciplined reflection and thought about it.

Making Progress toward Learning Objectives. Much has been written about measurable objectives which technically enable one to use them as criteria against which progress can be assessed. While it is important that measurable objectives are used, most frequently they are useful as criteria for a final or summative evaluation and not for measuring on-going progress. Developmental theories are more helpful for formative evaluations, which are needed in monitoring and supporting progress toward achieving the established objectives. In most experiential learning, three types of development occur, though not all of them may be a part of the learning plan and objectives.

Cognitive development is most frequently required. To monitor progress in this area, Bloom's cognitive domain taxonomy (1956) can be most helpful. He noted that progression of understanding begins with the student's ability to present knowledge, then analyze it, and finally apply it. Adopting this developmental sequence, one can document a student's progress by noting his/her ability to:

a) describe (or being aware and informed about) the experience and related matters;

b) analyze, synthesize and generalize from one or a collection of experiences; and

c) take action or make a decision to take action.

An analysis of a student journal or paper, for example, can reveal how much the student can do in each of the three progressive categories. A student may also be required to simply complete a taxonomy by which an instructor can assess the student's progress (Permaul and Miko, 1976).

Personal development is another area of emphasis for many experiential learners. For final evaluation, there are many guides dealing with interpersonal competencies which a student can demonstrate in a variety of ways (Breen, Conlon and Whitaker, 1977). There are also descriptors for ego development (Chickering, 1976). However, to monitor progress toward these developments, once again the focus must be the identification of progressive indicators in the process. Robert A. Georges and Michael O. Jones (1980) provide a possible framework through their research on the human factors involved when people study people in natural field settings. They note that four critical events occur regardless of the specific fieldwork or subject being studies, because the student "must explain his/her presence and purpose to others, gain their confidence and cooperation, and develop and maintain mutually acceptable relationships." These events have been described by Georges and Jones as identification of the dilemma, confrontation with self and others, compromise, and reflection and introspection.

Modifying Georges and Jones' concept on the human factors involved when people study people, some indicators for monitoring progress in personal and interpersonal development can be established:

a) Recognizing the role that human factors play in the planning and implementation of fieldwork -- Statements of purposes and lists of objectives only reflect the objective and formal reasons for pursuing field study. The presuppositions, assumptions, conceptions, expectations, personal motives, feelings and/or biases on the part of the student, instructor, field supervisor and others, also affect the manner in which the field project is designed and conducted. These human factors frequently are subtle and surface during the implementation stage. Becoming aware of these human factors is a good indicator of student's awareness of self and others and the beginning of understanding of the self and others.

b) Confronting the dilemma -- Once the student recognizes the human factors involved, the next phase is to face up to them. Frequently, the student finds that his/her expectations are erroneous or that satisfying the prerequisites for interacting successfully with others is difficult, if not impossible. He/she may also learn about new

identities which others ascribe to him/her. Others may question his/her motives and behavior. Confronting these elements leads one to re-examine oneself to assess and clarify one's own intentions and behavior as well as those of others. This phase goes beyond self-understanding. It involves self-inquiry and sorting out what one likes and dislikes about oneself and others.

c) Dealing with the dilemma -- This is a stage when the student is willing to do something, to change and even to compromise. Facing up to reality can be an effective stimulus for change. The student may alter his/her strategies in order to reach his/her original goals. On the other hand, he/she may compromise by modifying those goals. Whichever path the student takes, he/she must take into consideration questions of values, priorities, interpersonal relationships and the human dynamics involved. Being aware of why and how changes are being made leads one to a third level of understanding of self and others.

d) Reflection and introspection -- From time to time, all human beings take time to reflect on who, what and where we are in life. Such reflection and introspection are more likely to occur when one is exposed to unfamiliar and unexpected phenomena, when contrasts exist between the past and the present, and when expectations and actualities differ. Recognizing the changes, the differences and the contrasts between before and after brings one to another level of human understanding.

These stages reflect human experiences rather than demonstration of specific skills or competencies. However, to achieve a particular personal or interpersonal competency, one would have experienced the stages. For example, to achieve a sense of self-confidence, one must:

a) know who he/she is,

b) accept and reject respectively what he/she likes and dislikes by confronting oneself,

c) be willing to change in light of the reality, and

d) reassess oneself and gain a sense of hopeful satisfaction through reflection and introspection of past and present.

Given these stages of experiences, one can measure progress of most personal and interpersonal competencies.

Moral and ethical development is a third area frequently pursued through field study. Here again, three developmental models are available -- Kohlberg, Perry and Loevinger (Chickering, 1976). These models are also very compatible. Basically, the stages of ego and moral development begin with basic duality (all matters are either right or wrong based on authorities or stereotypes), to multiple possibilities (a matter could be right, wrong or somewhere in between, depending on the circumstances), to formulation of independent principles in guiding one's behavior, to tentative and finally definitive commitment to selected principles and values. These stages of development, once again, can be used as progressive indicators in monitoring and supporting student development.

Providing Student with Feedback. Timely feedback is essential for any kind of learning. It requires interaction between student and him/herself, as well as with selected others -- instructional personnel and people with whom the student comes in contact in the field.

These interactions may take many forms. Raising questions and challenging students' observations or conclusions are, perhaps, the most familiar types of feedback. These are obviously important, but there are other types of feedback which are equally important. They include the following:

a) Sharing of experiences is most helpful to the inexperienced students. Their expectations are often idealistic, and consequently, the reality has a shattering effect on the neophytes. To know that others are experiencing similar conditions is most reassuring.

b) Positive reinforcement from the mentors is important. Again, learning from field experience can be lonely and unfamiliar to the student. Further, learning by nature has a tendency to be critical. Both elements can be discouraging to the student. Therefore, a word of approval and praise from the "authorities" provides a bolstering effect on the student.

c) Guidance and encouragement to use the problem-solving approach are needed again and again. Rather than questioning and challenging the student, it is more helpful to help the student identify the problem, consider various solutions, and experiment with what seems to be the best solution. This approach is not only consistent with the need for positive reinforcement, but teaches the student to become an independent learner.

Provision of Additional and Supplementary Resources. All instructors and students are familiar with this process through classroom and laboratory experiences. Yet, many students completely abandon publications and existing sources of expertise for assistance when they go out to the field. In part, the experience is usually stimulating and exciting, capturing the student's complete attention. In part colleagues and fellow workers at the field agency seldom, if ever, refer to books, journals and other sources of expertise. Though one needs to stress in this case that experience should be the prominent teacher, it is important to note that students can seldom "re-invent the entire wheel" within a period of an academic quarter, semester or even year. The instructional personnel, therefore, need to encourage and make accessible additional and supplementary informational resources.

On-going Documentation of Learning. Documentation of learning is obviously helpful to the instructor in monitoring progress. It is also a supportive process for the student. Documentation as learning occurs provides the foundation for further learning. Production of such documentation requires the student to reflect on his/her experiences. Occasional review of on-going documentation by the student provides the basis for generalization and formulation of abstract concepts. Both of these exercises are essential to successful experiential learning. The use of on-going documentation by the student to support his/her learning needs to be stressed, as it is usually an unfamiliar skill in the student experience.

Principles. In view of what has been said in fulfilling the monitoring and supporting objectives, the following principles can be inferred:

a) To assure that learning indeed occurs from field experiences, students must complete all stages of an experiential learning cycle.

b) In monitoring learning progress, both students and instructional personnel can use developmental indicators from selected cognitive, personal and interpersonal, and moral and ethical developmental theories.

c) Feedback is essential for supporting students and their learning while they are in the field. Feedback

from peers by sharing each other's experiences has a reassuring effect on the student. Positive reinforcement from "authorities" also provides encouragement. Finally, feedback which guides the student to use problem-solving techniques enhances independent learning.

d) Reinventing the wheel totally is neither possible nor is it the prime purpose of experiential learning. Use of publications and existing expertise adds to and supplements field learning. Therefore, these should be made accessible to the students.

e) Documentation as the learning occurs is an important support to students. Production of documentation requires students to reflect on their experiences, while periodic review of documentation by students provides the basis for generalization and conceptualization. Documentation also provides the actual products through which the instructors assess the student's progress.

EXEMPLARY INSTRUMENTS AND PRACTICES ADOPTING MONITORING AND SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

There are a variety of practices requiring students to write about their experiences in the forms of journals, logs, field notes, progress reports and so on. Writing about the experiences, when properly guided by the instructor is one of the most effective tools for monitoring and supporting. It provides a written record which can be shared and preserved for purposes of documentation and assessment. It requires the student to commit his/her experience to words. With guidance, the student can also be required to record his/her reflection and to use these periodic writings as a basis for generalization and formulation of new concepts. In short, whatever form it takes, regular writing about experiences is one effective way of guiding the student through the experiential learning cycle. Further, the writing provides documentation for the instructor to monitor student progress based on developmental theories. Finally, it provides the student with the opportunity to interact with self and with instructional personnel by reviewing respectively one's own writing and instructor's comments.

Several specific applications for the use of journal writing have been developed. One form of journal recording makes use of critical incidents as foci for reflection. Figure 2 is a sample on how to approach such writing (Jenks and Murphy, 1981).

JOURNAL

1. The log: The log requires the intern to say concisely and specifically just what was done at a particular time in the placement. It is similar to the who, what, where of the lead paragraph of a news story. The log will require accurate, factual recording of what happened in a particular time frame.

2. Recording of questions: Each intern is to record three questions a day -- something you find interesting and relevant. The questions are to be directed at anyone in the governmental agency you are working under. (Answers are not expected in the journal, only questions.)

3. Recording of perceptions: The detailed recording of perceptions in the journal helps the student/intern assemble, organize and begin to make sense of his/her own observations and experiences. What did you see? What did you observe? What patterns begin to emerge in the course of events in your placement? How does your placement fit into the political system?, etc.

4. Recording of feelings: The recording of your feelings towards the internship, the work you are doing, and the political system (positive or negative).

5. Recording of fantasies: The recording of fantasies assists the student/intern in the process of career exploration and may assist growth in many other ways. Interns try on different selves. They fantasize becoming councilperson, commissioner, city manager, the administrative assistant, the client, the victim, etc. A deeper understanding and sensitivity may be developed as the interns, in their fantasies, take the role of the other. This kind of exploration of self is important in the development of self-confidence and effectiveness. In their fantasies, students may dare; the journal legitimizes this kind of risk taking.

6. Discussion section: The discussion frees up the journal format and is designed to encourage the student/intern to take one facet of the day's experience and deal with it in detail, or to view the day's experience in its totality. This is the free association section of the journal. Students can write in in stream of consciousness or any method they choose.

7. New language recording: Dealing with politicians, bureaucrats, lawyers, corporate executives, lobbyists, the press and public interest advocates, interns soon learn that each placement has its own specialized language. Recording such language assists in the communicator role. It is an indispensable aid in the intern's beginning process toward professionalism. In short, the interns record the language of the political zoo (i.e., hawks, doves, packing order, fat cats, and gerrymander).

Another approach developed by Permaul and Miko (1976) is known as the Record-Reflection Log. The Record-Reflection Log asked students to record by describing "learning experiences" they have encountered. (The precise definition of "learning experience" is left to the student). Following the recording of learning experience(s), students are asked to reflect upon it by explaining thoughts, ideas, concepts or questions which have grown out of the experience(s) recorded.

A third example of effective use of journal-writing has been developed by Paul Davis (Jenks and Murphy, 1981). Figure 3 gives the precise instructions on Davis' approach. This approach and its variations are also used as guidelines for progress reports. Variations frequently include questions

or observations on specific facets of the field assignments that are directly related to the subject matters being studied.

LOG ASSIGNMENT: Write a brief log about an incident that happens at your workplace this week (See below for further information). If you are not working, you can find an event in some other activity such as school, shopping, riding the bus, at home, etc. The log should be about a page in length and handed in at class next week. I will read it and mail it back to you next Tuesday.

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Seminars and individual conferences are best used for interaction, sharing of experiences and feedback. The major drawbacks are the cost of individual conferences and the logistical and geographic constraints to meeting regularly. Whenever possible, some meetings are desirable. Some instructors use the seminars as a means of integrating the reading assignments, guest lectures and the student's field experience, thus ensuring the use of supplementary resources, as well as linking practices with theories. Another use of seminars is to have students make presentations of their field studies, followed by questions and discussions. This approach enables sharing to occur, as well as further reflection and analysis of the experience with the benefit of additional resources from classmates and instructors. With either seminar approach, the instructor will be able to assess student progress in general and spot potential problems.

There are two instruments which allow the student to do self-monitoring while providing the instructor and field supervisor with similar information. One is the matrix approach (Permaul and Miko, 1967). This approach basically asks the student or the monitor to record regularly various student developments along developmental indicators in relationship to learning objectives. Figure 4 shows a matrix form. To follow one's progress, one simply needs to review the number and type of recordings in each box. Ideally, a student will have most of his/her early recordings in the first column, slowly moving into the second and third column as he/she progresses.

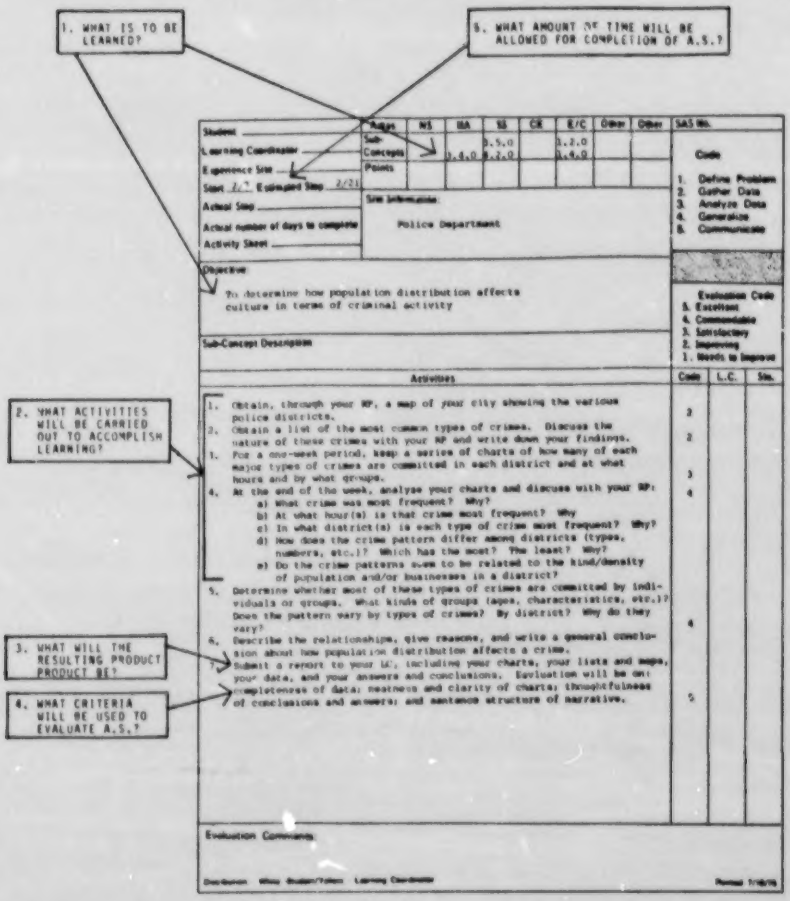
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS	Become aware/ inform/ describe	Analyze/synthesize/generalize/ conceptualize	Application/ make decision
Cognitive learning objectives a b c			

PERSONAL/ INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS	Recognition of human factors	Confrontation	Change/compromise/act
Personal/ interpersonal learning objectives a b c			

ETHICAL DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS	Duality	Multiplicity	Commitment
Ethical learning objectives a b c			

The other instrument used for self-monitoring is an activity sheet developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory for the Experience-Based Career Education Project (Henderson & Hyre, 1979). Essentially, the activity sheets are detailed learning contracts. Each activity sheet outlines a series of activities to be performed in learning one specific objective. The activities are determined in accordance with an inquiry model beginning with activities to define the problem, then to gather data, to analyze data, to generalize and finally communicate. Figure 5 provides an example of an activity sheet. Because of its specificity, one can easily monitor progress toward achievement of objectives.

An Activity Sheet


1. WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED?
5. WHAT AMOUNT OF TIME WILL BE ALLOWED FOR COMPLETION OF A.S.?
2. WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT TO ACCOMPLISH LEARNING?
3. WHAT WILL THE RESULTING PRODUCT BE?
4. WHAT CRITERIA WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE A.S.?
Police Department
To determine how population distribution affects culture in terms of criminal activity
Activities
1. Obtain, through your RP, a map of your city showing the various police districts.
2. Obtain a list of the most common types of crimes. Discuss the nature of these crimes with your RP and write down your findings.
3. For a one-week period, keep a series of charts of how many of each major types of crimes are committed in each district and at what hours and by what groups.
4. At the end of the week, analyse your charts and discuss with your RP:
a) What crime was most frequent? Why?
b) At what hour(s) is that crime most frequent? Why
c) In what district(s) is each type of crime most frequent? Why?
d) How does the crime pattern differ among districts (types, numbers, etc.)? Which has the most? The least? Why?
e) Do the crime patterns seem to be related to the kind/density of population and/or businesses in a district?
5. Determine whether most of these types of crimes are committed by individuals or groups. What kinds of groups (ages, characteristics, etc.)? Does the pattern vary by types of crimes? By district? Why do they vary?
6. Describe the relationships, give reasons, and write a general conclusion about how population distribution affects a crime.
7. Submit a report to your LC, including your charts, your lists and maps, your data, and your answers and conclusions. Evaluation will be on: completeness of data; neatness and clarity of charts; thoughtfulness of conclusions and answers; and sentence structure of narrative.
Evaluation Comments

Whether one uses logs, seminars or activity sheets, the key to effective monitoring and supporting of learning is to have clearly established learning objectives and activities which meet the principles noted earlier.

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